

COLLEGE REPORT

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Many political scholars maintain that until the middle of the 18th Century, America could not really be called a democratic country. Both in politics and in education the privileges of participation were almost reserved for the upper classes. Although a small percentage of the talented from the lower economic and social brackets succeeded in making educational opportunities for themselves, the vast majority were unable even to secure free elementary education. During all previous centuries these aristocratic arrangements had prevailed, but the maturation of the democratic ideal during the first decades of the 1800's brought

laws to make possible the election of Jackson, a very much more democratic leader than Jefferson, and except for women and negroes, political democracy became a fact throughout the nation. Simultaneously with the demand for democracy in education. Schools partially supported by taxation had been established in Massachusetts by the legislation of 1647, but they made little provision for the children of the growing number of industrial workers. Everywhere—even in Massachusetts—education was considered to be a privilege and not a social necessity.

TO SPREAD educational opportunities to all the people, several groups of individuals began campaigns on different fronts. Each contributed important elements toward success, and by the end of the Civil War in the North and by 1890 in the South democratic education on all levels had been achieved. Even 100 years before the American Revolution, the

frontier had been a flourishing seed-plot of democracy. By the time of the outbreak of the Revolution there had been developed, according to Frederick Jackson Turner, "a distinct belt of democratic territory extending from the back country of New England down through western New York, Pennsylvania, and the South," throughout which the pioneer "held with passionate devotion the idea that he was building under freedom a new society, based on self-government, and for the welfare of the average man."

Turner conceived "the welfare of the average man" to be considerably more than the franchise and economic individualism. "As he dwelt among the stumps of his newly cut clearing, the pioneer had the creative vision of a new order of society. . . . He declared that his children should enter into an heritage of education, comfort, and social welfare, and for this ideal he bore the scars of the wilderness."

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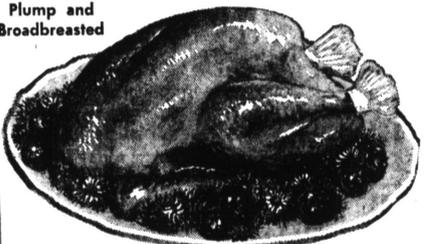


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